

Dear Commissioners:

Stop hidden phone fees so I can truly compare prices of phone services. I support the petition filed by the National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates and endorsed by other consumer advocacy organizations. CG Docket No. 04-208, Petition for Declaratory Ruling Regarding Truth-In-Billing and Billing Format, is long overdue.

Phone bills should be truthful and easy to understand. When Ma Bell was deregulated, I THOUGHT it would be a good thing: increased competition. Telecommunications in this the US has gotten so bad, it approaches the level of a Third World Country. Because there was no alternative, we were stuck with Verizon as the local provider. Last year we spent three HOURS on the 'phone trying to call between Murrieta and La Jolla to buy some tickets. Eventually, a Verizon operator said they simply were unable to make the connection and transferred us, somehow, to SBC which did. We put men on the moon and our 'phones don't work. After a quarter century, we returned from Japan in 2003. The longer I'm here, the more I wish we'd have stayed in Japan.

Because this practice is tolerated by the FCC, long distance and wireless phone companies are able to hide the true cost of service. These add-ons make the advertised price of service significantly less than the amount of the check I have to write each month to pay the bill. Competition will not work if consumers cannot accurately compare prices when shopping for service.

Many states are stepping up to address this problem. They should be allowed to proceed. However, the FCC shouldn't shirk its responsibility, nor limit states from doing more.

The FCC should immediately grant the NASUCA petition to investigate billing practices, and prohibit phone and wireless companies from imposing separate monthly fees, line items or surcharges unless expressly mandated by law or the charge is expressly authorized by a governmental authority.